OBN News January 1990

"The ONTARIO BISEXUAL NETWORK (OBN) is a network of fine people dedicated to improving their lives as bisexual men and women... The Ontario Bisexual Network and our action groups stress that people who identify as bisexual are, like all men and women, good and valuable people. Our goal is to create environments in our society where bisexual men and women can be themselves openly and enjoy life fully without restriction or prejudice from others... We support the principle of complete gay, lesbian, and bisexual liberation from oppressive attitudes, policies, laws, actions (and inactions) everywhere." Statement distributed at Pride Day, 1989.

Next Meeting(s)

We meet on the first Thursday of every month, from 6 to 8 p.m., at the 519 Community Centre (519 Church Street, just North of Wellesley). The theme for discussion at the January 4th meeting was to have been **"Coming Out as a Bisexual"**, but this has been rescheduled for February 1st. **"Safe Sexuality"** will be featured on March 1st.

Last Meeting

"Michael Da Vinci"

A number of ideas were discussed at the December 7th meeting. It was noted, for example, that there are still a lot of misconceptions about bisexuality in the minds of others. Several people felt it was important to publicize (and thereby enlarge) the network, in order to get more contact with other bisexual people.

There was a proposal that one function of the network could be to educate people and confront the popular myths about bisexuality, within the gay and lesbian communities as well as in the heterosexual community. One person suggested that there could be a role for OBN to play in helping bisexuals and other people get access to competent information about safer sex.

A fundamental activity of the network is to work with the gay and lesbian communities to end all oppression of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. We sometimes feel like there is a separate oppression of bisexuals by gays and lesbians, as well as the prejudice by heterosexuals for our attractions to people of the same gender. However, it is important to understand that any feelings of hostility toward us by some gays or lesbians are in fact just another effect of their having been heavily oppressed for same-gender loving, and that their goals and ours in liberation are essentially the same.

Events

"Michael Da Vinci"

Boston Bisexuality Conference, May 1989

Several of our members attended the Conference on Bisexuality held at Harvard University. It was a real eye-opener to meet well over a hundred other bisexual people from all over the continent. We were whole-heartedly welcomed as Canadians and we received good ideas (particularly from the Boston Bisexual Men's and Women's Networks) as to how to organize here in the Toronto area. One of our people taped the keynote speaker's address, and this can be made available to anyone else who is interested.

(Some members are planning to attend the 1990 Conference, in San Francisco. Several more have indicated an interest, so perhaps we'll be able to provide registration information in next month's News.*–ed)*

Gay Pride Day, June 1989

People from the Ontario Bisexuality Network proudly carried a banner bearing our name at the parade in Toronto. We also had a booth on Church Street during the celebrations, where we sold small plastic "bicycle" pins as a silent symbol to identify ourselves.

CANADIAN GAY ARCHIVES

Editorial

Dave Gillett

Four of the seven people who attended the December 7th meeting listed "writing" amongst the things they do (although only one of them does it professionally). So I hope I can skip the normal "please write something for the newsletter" pitch and jump directly into discussing *what kind* of thing I'd like you to write.

This newsletter is primarily directed at an *internal* audience: the members of OBN. Most of its content is specifically of interest to members, reports on activities just past and notices of coming events. Some material may be more easily presented in written than in oral form, and this material will also reach members who are unable, for whatever reason, to attend meetings.

The newsletter also has an *external* audience: bisexuals who are not members of OBN. One of the easy (and yet effective!) ways in which we can network with other groups of bisexuals is by exchanging newsletters with them. A spare copy of the newsletter might be just the thing to attract a new member–that's why you should have two copies!

Finally, there is the *temporal* audience: those who will come after us. It is by recording our thoughts and activities on paper that we, as a community, acquire a history and a memory that transcends our individual tenures.

Articles which meet the needs of all three audiences will probably fall into one of three categories. Personal anecdotes and introspective pieces share the experiential roots of our identification as bisexual. Analytical articles about theory and politics, ranging from short book reviews to full essays, form the framework of our liberation as bisexuals. Erotic art and literature celebrate the blossoming of our bisexuality.

Editorial Policies

Safety. Many bisexuals are, at least partially, closeted. Since sanitizing the content of the newsletter would defeat the purpose, there's a risk that possession of an issue, or mention in print by name, might lead to embarassment or even harassment. In order to make participation in this newsletter as safe as possible, articles will be published under a pseudonym unless written permission to publish the author's name accompanies the article, and this rule also applies to members' names mentioned within articles. (Since there is no similar risk in being identified as a non-member, references to third parties such as politicians and artists do not require this protection.) Copies distributed by mail will be discreetly identified by as minimal a return address as we can manage (PO Box only, or initials and street address).

Honesty. Submissions may be edited for spelling, grammar, length, and clarity *with the author's permission.* ("Michael" did give me permission to edit his reports on 1989 events, and I don't think I've abused it.) The issue becomes important only when dealing with articles where the experiences, ideas, and sensations conveyed must be those intended by the author. In case of disagreement, the author determines whether the article says what he/she means, and the editor determines whether the article is suitable for publication here; in general, the author should be given the benefit of the doubt.

Letters to the Editor. Letters are, of course, always welcome. Please try to keep them under a page in length; they won't normally be edited for spelling or grammar, but may be for size...

Masthead

There were several serious errors (of omission and commission) in the first printing of this issue, attributable to the fact that it was a first attempt, and the holiday rush. Luckily, the volume is still small enough that it's practical to re-print it. "Michael" took notes at the December meeting, so he got to write it up, and included the other information on last year's events. I did the typing, layout and photocopying; I may need to ask for help with this when we get a bit bigger. By the way, if anyone can come up with a catchier title for the newsletter, I'm quite willing to consider it...

Dave Gillett